

WASHINGTON LETTER.

(From our Regular Correspondent.)

WASHINGTON, Dec., 14, 1888.

Senator Frye, who presented the report which secured the passage of the last River and Harbor bill by the Senate, is strongly opposed to passing an appropriation bill at the present session for that purpose, and so many Republican Senators are in sympathy with him that I have no hesitation in predicting that no River and Harbor bill will become a law at this session. The bill just reported to the House, carrying an appropriation of nearly \$12,000,000 will probably be passed by that body, but it will die of neglect when it reaches the Senate Committee. The reason why the Republican Senators oppose this bill is very simple, and it may be added, sensible. The River and Harbor bill passed at the last session appropriated \$21,562,788, 97, by far the largest amount ever appropriated at one time for a similar purpose. Only a small portion of this money has yet been spent and there is no necessity for a new appropriation for at least a year.

Senator Stewart who is noted for his obliging disposition, has, by request, introduced a curious sort of bill. It provides for the construction of 350 pneumatic torpedo-throwers, and appropriates \$10,000,000 for the purpose. These guns are to be capable of throwing steel torpedoes charged with not less than 500 pounds of dynamite or a similar material, a distance of two miles. The bill also proposes that these guns shall be distributed among the fifteen principal harbors of the United States to be used for purposes of defense.

Senator Sherman says: "There is not the slightest foundation for the story now going the rounds of the press to the effect that I refuse to accept a position in President-elect Harrison's Cabinet for fear I would be succeeded by Gov. Foraker. The possibility of my seat in the Senate being occupied by Senator Foraker will not weigh one hair in connection with my going into the State department." This settles the absurd story, but it does not settle the more important question as to whether Senator Sherman is to go into the Cabinet.

The harsh criticisms of the democratic members of the House upon the action of the democratic Senators in not more vigorously opposing the Senate tariff bill has stirred the latter gentleman up. They have held a caucus and determined to oppose the bill at every turn.

This will not change the result, the bill is certain to pass the Senate—but it will result in stretching out the debate and delaying the passage of the bill for some time. It was hoped to get it through before the holidays, but it will probably be well along in January before it gets through.

The bill making the Agricultural Department an Executive Department of the Government, passed both Houses at the last session, but was amended by the Senate. This week the House refused to agree to the Senate amendments and a conference was ordered. The bill as passed by the House gives the new department control of the weather bureau. This clause was struck out by the Senate. There is no opposition to the main features of the bill, so that it may be taken for granted that Gen. Harrison will have a Secretary of Agriculture in his Cabinet.

The Democrats of the House have held two caucuses to try and decide upon which course they must pursue in regard to admitting new States. The caucuses arrived at no decision except the fact that the party was divided upon the question. The more progressive element headed by S. S. Cox, of New York, and Springer, of Illinois, favors the admission of all the Territories except Utah and New Mexico, while the Bourbon, or monarch element, headed by Cox, of Alabama, and McAdoo, of New Jersey, are opposed to admitting any Territories unless it is shown that they are democratic. This position is almost certain to

no action will be taken this winter though there is a bare chance that enough democrats will vote with the Republicans to admit South Dakota, Montana, Washington and Idaho, if the subject can be brought before the House, which is doubtful, owing to the strong democratic opposition.

The naval excursion to Hayti, sent out by the administration, is the subject of much joking here. The idea of sending four powerful vessels of war to make a demand upon a nation whose army consists of less than a thousand men and whose navy scarcely exists at all, is entirely too ludicrous for serious consideration.

Senator Farwell introduced a bill increasing the pay of the Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court to \$20,500, and that of the Associated Justices to \$20,000 each.

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